

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 3104

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ID

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO

REF: STATE 049686

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING DELIVERY OF MESSAGE IN REFTEL, PRESIDENT SUHARTO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION, STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN, VULNERABILITY OF THAILAND, ANC CONTINUED INTEREST IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY F5E'S. HE ALSO EXPRESSED RECOGNITION NEW ADMINISTRATION'S CONCERNS ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO MARCH 10 I READ DEPARTMENT'S MESSAGE CONTAINED IN REFTEL.

3. IN RESPONSE PRESIDENT SUHARTO MADE THESE POINTS:

A. INDONESIA AND OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD FOLLOWED PRESIDENT CARTER'S CAMPAIGN AND HAD BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT ABSENCE OF ANY REFERENCE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. INITIAL MOVES OF NEW ADMINISTRATION LEFT THEM STILL WONDERING WHAT ATTITUDE WOULD BE TOWARD THIS AREA. PRESIDENT PLEASED TO RECEIVE MESSAGE AND REASSURED BOTH BY COMMENTS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS AND FACT IT INCLUDES REFERENCE TO ASEAN. SOUTHEAST
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ASIAN COUNTRIES WANT MORE AND MORE TO WORK TOGETHER THROUGH ASEAN IN RELATIONS WITH REST OF WORLD.

B. INDOCHINESES STATES WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR GAINS BUT WILL INCREASINGLY REPRESENT THREAT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. THAILAND IS MOST VULNERABLE, FACING COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN NORTH AND SOUTH AND INTERNAL COMMUNIST THREAT AS WELL. NEW THAI GOVERNMENT IS TAKING STRONGER STEPS AND

IS COOPERATING CLOSELY WITH MALAYSIA. INDONESIA HAS ENCOURAGED SUCH COOPERATION AND ITSELF COOPERATES CLOSELY WITH MALAYSIA.

C. PRESIDENT WELCOMES CONTINUATION U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS STILL PRIORITY OF INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT.

D. BECAUSE OF PRIORITY OF DEVELOPMENT, GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT TO INDONESIA. PRESIDENT APPRECIATES "THAT INDONESIA MUST PASS CONGRESSIONAL EXAMINATION." INDONESIA HAS DEVELOPED FRIENDS IN CONGRESS AND HOPES FOR BROADER UNDERSTANDING THERE OF INDONESIA'S SPECIAL NEEDS. INDONESIA WILL WELCOME CONTINUATION OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE, IF NOT THROUGH GRANT, THROUGH CONTINUING CREDITS. PRIORITY IS ON PURCHASE OF F5E AIRCRAFT. INDONESIA WANTS TO CONTINUE U.S. RELATIONSHIP BUT MUST MAKE EARLY DECISION RE AIRCRAFT. FRENCH HAVE MADE OFFER OF MIRAGES WHICH IS ALSO BEING CONSIDERED.

E. RATIFICATION OF NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY IS BEING SENT TO PARLIAMENT. INDONESIA WANTS TO ASSURE ALL THAT IT FAVORS ONLY PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.

F. PRESIDENT IS WELL AWARE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE PRESIDENT CARTER ASSIGNS TO HUMAN RIGHTS. GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA ALSO SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS BUT MUST ALSO INSIST ON RECOGNITION BY ITS CITIZENS OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT.

4. IN CONCLUDING CONVERSATION, I MADE THESE ADDITIONAL POINTS:

A. U.S. RECOGNIZED THAILAND'S PROBLEMS AND HOPED TO
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CONTINUE GRANT ASSISTANCE TO THAIS FOR AT LEAST ONE MORE YEAR.

B. OUR WILLINGNESS TO HOLD ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN IS FURTHER EVIDENCE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S INTEREST IN CLOSE RELATIONS THIS AREA.

C. WE WELCOMED PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND, WHILE WE DID NOT WISH INTERVENE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WE BENEFITTED FROM CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH INDONESIAN OFFICIALS ON PROGRESS TOWARD RELEASE OF DETAINEES. PRESIDENT NODDED AT LATTER BUT DID NOT COMMENT.

5. PRESIDENT DID NOT RAISE QUESTION OF CONSULTATIONS BUT FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK, IN EARLIER CONVERSATION, DID. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN HAVING MINISTER PLANNING WIDJOJO VISIT U.S. (WIDJOJO SUBSEQUENTLY RAISED QUESTION DIRECTLY WITH ME.) I TOLD MALIK ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT YET SORTED OUT EXACT PROCESS OF HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATIONS.

6. COMMENT: FROM PRESIDENT'S REACTION AND FROM REACTIONS

I HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK AND OTHERS, I BELIEVE TIMELY MESSAGE HAS GONE FAR TO CORRECT ANY IMPRESSION OF LACK OF INTEREST IN INDONESIA AND ASEAN ON PART NEW ADMINISTRATION. I APPRECIATE SUPPORT OF WHITE HOUSE AND DEPARTMENT.

7 I WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE ANY DIRECT REPLY BY PRESIDENT SUHARTO, ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE HE MIGHT INSTRUCT AMBASSADOR RUSMIN, UPON HIS RETURN, TO SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. (NO ONE HAS MENTIONED THIS AND WE HAVE CERTAINLY NOT SUGGESTED IT.) IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN, REALIZING PRESIDENT'S MANY COMMITMENTS, I WOULD SUGGEST HE CONSIDER RECEIVING ALL FIVE ASEAN AMBASSADORS. THIS WOULD BE CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT GESTURE TO COUNTERBALANCE MOVES TO VIETNAM AND WOULD TAKE CARE, IN ONE MEETING, OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL DESIRBS FOR TALKS WITH PRESIDENT.

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8. I SUGGEST, SINCE SUHARTO MAY MENTION THIS MESSAGE TO OTHER ASEAN LEADERS, THAT DEPARTMENT, IN APPROPRIATE FASHION, INFORM OTHER ASEAN POSTS OF THIS EXCHANGE.

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